

CCD BULLETIN

Issues in Coastal Community Development

FROM THE FIELD: PLACE-MAKING IN COASTAL RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island is composed of 39 cities and towns that have traditionally made decisions about natural and economic resources without fully considering the impacts on neighboring jurisdictions. Increasingly, however, these communities recognize the need for collaboration and are partners in regional planning—a way to make decisions about shared resources while striving for common benefits, such as affordable homes, clean water, safe neighborhoods and improved public access to the shoreline. Regional planning represents an opportunity for “place-making” that resonates with the independent spirit upon which the Ocean State and New England were built.

One of Rhode Island Sea Grant’s primary Coastal Community Development projects is the reinvention of the 1983 Metro Bay Special Area Management Plan (SAMP). The revised Metro Bay SAMP is a formal policy approach to implementing smart growth principles, intended to improve the economic, social and environmental resources of working waterfronts in Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket and Cranston. The plan is focused on streamlining the permitting process to encourage new investment, as well as providing recreational opportunities and public access to the coast. Given the demographics of these urban core communities, social aspects are integral to the program, providing challenges and great opportunities for redeveloping the Metro Bay waterfront as a national model for waterfront place-making.



Aquidneck Island West Side Rail Corridor



Pawtucket boat ramp, Narragansett Bay

Sea Grant is also working with the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission and other local stakeholders to create and implement a smart-growth-based regional master plan for a portion of the island’s western coast. The Aquidneck Island West Side Master Plan is a collaborative, voluntary approach designed to strengthen coastal planning, stimulate integrated coastal management, and support community and economic development. The Master Plan project was recently selected in a national EPA competition to receive assistance with the implementation phase of the project – a consulting team will assist the Planning Commission with the development of model regulations based on the existing regulatory framework and the Plan’s recommended strategies. Once the Plan has been accepted, each municipality will then be able to amend its regulatory documents to ensure that the Master Plan will be implemented as it was envisioned.

Both of these CCD projects have a key focus on looking beyond traditional borders and sectors towards integrated ecosystem management, and both incorporate similar strategies, such as defining key issues in collaboration with stakeholders, building strong and diverse stakeholder partnerships, and emphasizing capacity-building for municipal officials, regional planning commissions, and other current and future decision-makers in the community.

For more information contact Pam Rubinoff at rubi@gso.uri.edu. Or visit the Metro Bay SAMP website at <http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/metrosamp> or the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission website at www.aquidneckplanning.org.



RECOMMENDED READING

Local Tools for Smart Growth: Practical Strategies and Techniques to Improve Our Communities

www.naco.org/Content/ContentGroups/Programs_and_Projects/Environmental1/Sources/1528LocalTools.pdf

From the National Association of Counties (NACo) and EPA, this guide contrasts conventional practices and smart growth approaches for several development issues, including comprehensive planning, zoning, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, and citizen participation.

Affordable Housing and Smart Growth: Making the Connection

www.neighborhoodcoalition.org/pdfs/AH%20and%20SG.pdf

This publication of the Smart Growth Network discusses the importance of linking affordable housing efforts with smart growth projects, and examines the widespread perception that smart growth is antithetical to affordability. It uses case studies to illustrate various approaches to providing affordable housing stock as part of an overall smart growth strategy, including land use planning and tax-based incentives.

Smart Communities: Curbing Sprawl at its Core

www.lisc.org/resources/assets/asset_upload_file942_976.pdf

This report from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation serves as a basic primer of the case for why redevelopment of urban areas is crucial to controlling sprawl. It explores the necessary connection between community development and regional smart growth initiatives, and provides several case studies of successful initiatives in urban neighborhoods.



COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

Land Use Planning for Safe, Crime-free Neighborhoods

www.lgc.org/freepub/PDF/Land_Use/focus/plan_safe_neighborhoods.pdf

From the Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities, this four-page fact sheet outlines ways to create a sense of community and promote safety via thoughtful land use planning, traffic management, and architectural design.



KATRINA REBUILD UPDATE...

Mississippi Renewal Forum

Reports are now available from the Mississippi Renewal Forum, convened by Governor Barbour to explore options for rebuilding the Mississippi coast following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The design teams have created reconstruction plans for eleven coastal communities. Each plan offers detailed, neighborhood-by-neighborhood recommendations to retain and enhance traditional community character, including form-based codes for each area based on the Duany "SmartCode" transect method. To view the reports, go to: www.mississippirenewal.com/info/plansReports.html.

Bring New Orleans Back Commission

Last week the Urban Land Institute sent an advisory team of over 50 urban planning and disaster recovery experts to New Orleans to survey damage, interview residents, and make recommendations for sustainable rebuilding. Findings were presented to the Bring New Orleans Back Commission last Friday. See the ULI press release at: www.uli.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Press_Releases1&CONTENTID=41026&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm; the powerpoint presentation is available at: www.uli.org/Content/ContentGroups/PressReleases/2005/fnal_compress.ppt.